

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 7, 8, 11-13, 15-17, and 19-30 are pending in the application, with claims 7, 8, 16, and 17 being independent.

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the indication that the application contains allowable subject matter, and that claims 7, 8, 16, and 17 are allowed. Claim 11, 13, and 15 are amended to depend from allowable claim 7. Claims 19-30 are newly presented, and each depends from one of allowable claims 8, 16, and 17. New claims 19-30 are fully supported, for example, by original claims 11-13 and 15.

Claim rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11-13 and 15 stand rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,018,511 (Nishikiori). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection; however, these rejections are moot in view of the amendments to claims 11-13 and 15 to present them as dependent from allowable claim 7.

Applicants therefore submit that amended claims 11-13 and 15 are allowable over the cited references.

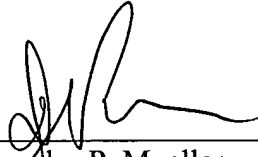
New claims 19-30 each depends from one of allowable claims 8, 16 and 17. Therefore, claims 19-30 are also believed to be allowable over the cited references, for at least the reason that they are dependent upon an allowable base claim.

In view of the above, favorable reconsideration in the form of a notice of allowance is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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